

REMARKS

The present application has been amended to overcome the Examiner's rejections and to clarify the patentable features of the Applicant's invention. In particular, claims 1, 9, 12 and 15 have been amended; claims 3, 10, 11, 17 and 20 have been canceled. Reconsideration of this application is hereby requested.

The claims as filed were rejected as being anticipated and/or obvious in view of the Pano and Hedlund patents. The claims have been amended to distinguish the features of the Applicant's invention from these patents.

In particular, claim 1 has been amended and now includes the subject matter of claims 3, 10 and 11. Amended claim 1 features a support member that defines a slot segment that extends outwardly from an aperture but is spaced inwardly with respect to the pocket. In addition, the resilient portion is recited as including at least one laterally extending slot that extends inwardly from the aperture. Neither the Pano nor the Hedlund patents show or suggest this construction. Both Pano and Hedlund illustrate the conventional construction of

using a single slot segment that extends outwardly from an aperture. Claim 1 should therefore be allowed. Claims 2 and 4-9 depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 1 and should also be allowed.

Claim 12, which was also rejected as being anticipated by the Pano patent, has been amended to feature a pocket that includes a slot segment and a coupling region that includes a plurality of relatively thin slots that are located intermediate the slot segments. Again, neither Pano nor Hedlund even remotely suggest this construction. Accordingly, claim 12 and its associated dependent claims 13 and 14 should be allowed.

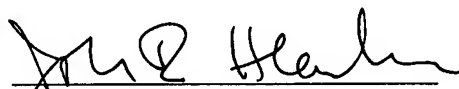
Claim 15 has been amended to recite that the pocket communicates with an aperture and that the deformable portion includes a plurality of relatively thin slots spaced inwardly with respect to the aperture. Neither Pano nor Hedlund illustrate a construction which includes a plurality of relatively thin slots that are spaced inwardly with respect to an aperture. Claim 15 should therefore be allowed. Claim 16, 18 and 19 depend from and are allowable along with claim 15.

New claim 21 includes the subject matter of allowable claim 13 and should be allowed. Claim 22 depends from and is allowable along with claim 21.

In view of the foregoing amendment and discussion, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Prompt notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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